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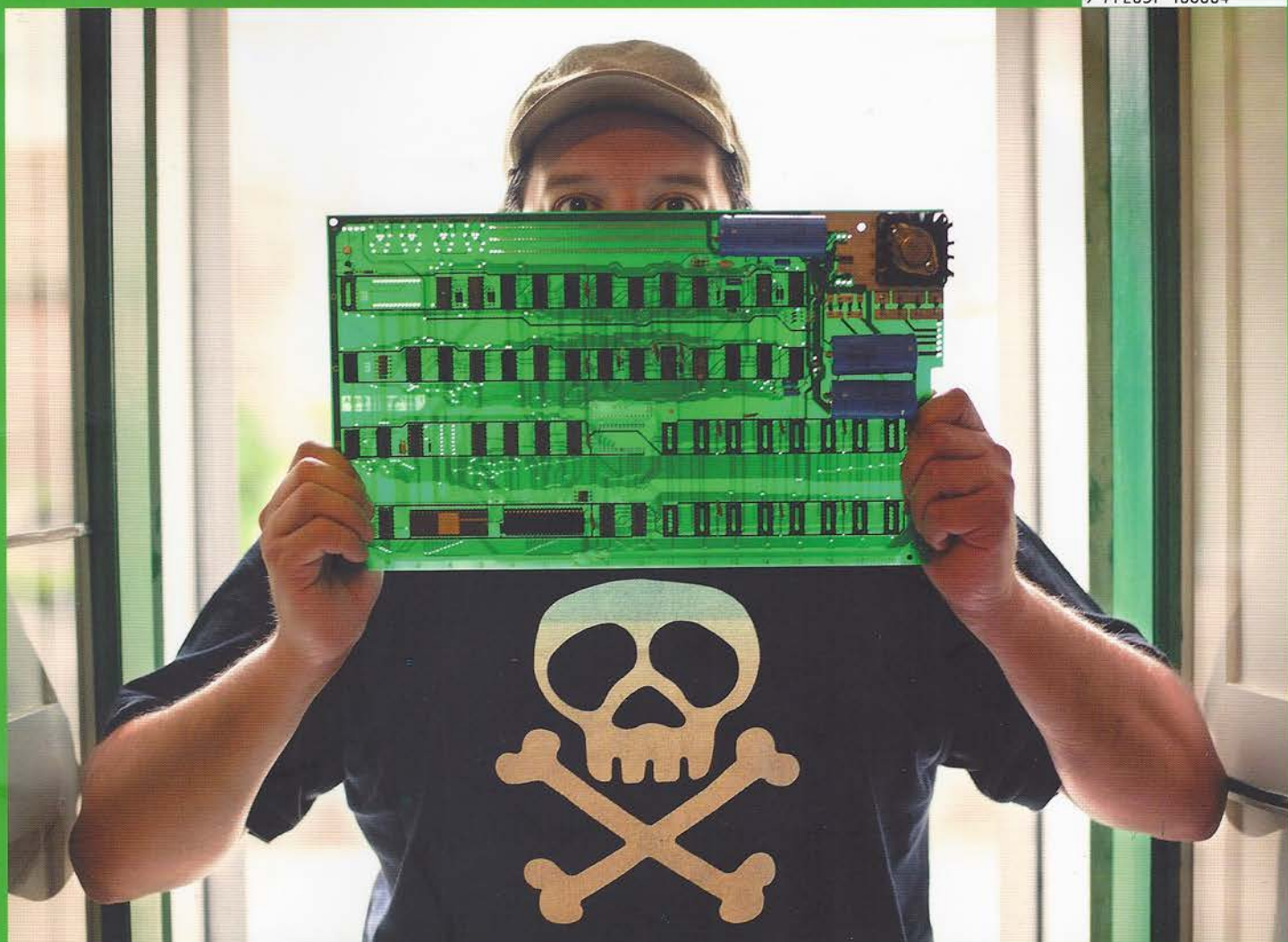
ISSUE 51 / Summer 2015

> Revive

ISSN 2037-108X



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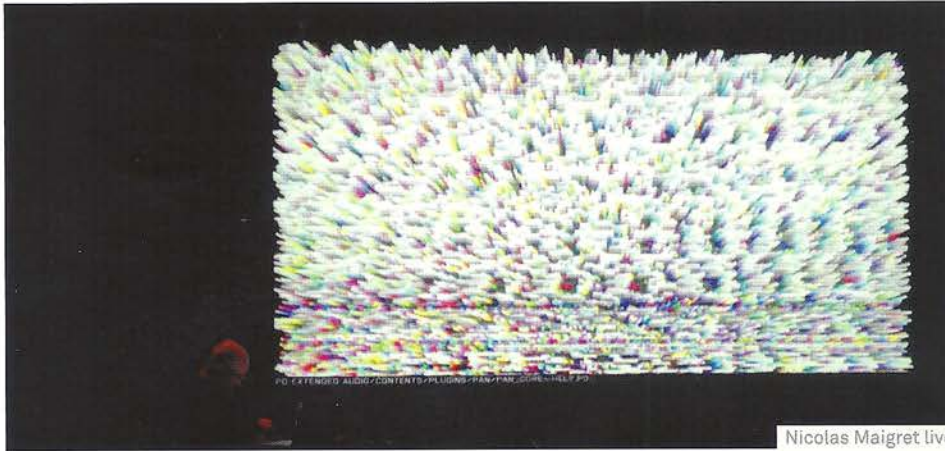
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Accès)s(#14, Disnovation

> report





Nicolas Maigret live

In the hidden galaxy of French art and technology festivals there has been a small gem taking place in Pau, capital of the Atlantic Pyrénées department. It's called "Accès(s)" and its first edition dates back to 2000. This 14th edition is directed by Pauline Chasseriaud and has been curated by Nicolas Maigret and Bertrand Grimault. It takes its name from a neologism: "Disnovation" a term proposed by artist Gregory Chatonsky, which tries to debunk the ideology of innovation permeating the industrial tech-culture (from start-up to online giants). The festival included a conference, an exhibition, workshops and different live performances. A remarkable array of guests were part of the conference, coming from quite different backgrounds. Belgian philosopher Pascal Chabot spoke about the myth of progress, which is not in the public imaginary anymore even though we paradoxically experience its power everyday. He suggested that it can now be seen as a component of the tension between techno-capitalism progress and human progress, and overcoming the "innovation" propaganda it can lead to a more suitable future. Matteo Pasquinelli sketched a study about the transition from the networked society to the "society of metadata" and the oppression of the online giants. Their insurgent use of AI is shared with secret services like CIA (as his director said "we kill people based on metadata") and the stock market in the so-called "algotrading." Pasquinelli affirms that capital has become "a form of computation." Francis Jauréguiberry explained how

we're all affected by cognitive overload - there's always new information that has to be treated immediately, a too intense short circuit, which leads to dreams of disconnection. Jean-Baptiste Bayle then presented his major work-in-progress called "Terminator Studies" (also in the exhibition): a map, timeline and newsfeed corroborating the hypothesis that we're slowly getting closer and closer to the science fiction scenario of the homonymous movie, with fatal elements such as propaganda, perpetual war, anti-hacker companies, brain implants in soldiers, corporation AI, etc. Finally mathematics scholar Emmanuel Ferrand investigated the so-called "equation of happiness" through Renè Thom's catastrophe theory (as catastrophe is a crisis that creates a shift), serendipity and one of the works of the important mathematician Alexandre Grotgendieck, who in the seventies published a provocative essay "Continuer la recherche scientifique?" ("Should we continue to progress scientific research?") provocatively addressing environmental problems. The exhibition investigated innovation as "propaganda," in a successful curatorial effort, with works consistently addressing the topic. Significantly, the first work encountered was a webcam (which had to be replaced a few times) pointed at the "Livermore Centennial Bulb" a lightbulb that has been working since 1901, dating back to a time when "planned obsolescence" was still an unknown concept. A critical and contradictory attitude was successfully experienced through the rest of works. Among them: the future primitivism of

Dardex in his "Refonte", primitive weapons made from electronic junk's materials, the incredible "Turtle 1" an "open source" car made in a village out of recycled cars in Ghana by the intrepid Set Up Shop duo, the "Grand Troc Chili" desirable hi-tech wooden sculptures that Nicolas Floc'h helped underprivileged community members in Chile to build. Julien Prévieux's "What Shall We Do Next?" playfully pushed to absurdity the patenting of gestures by hardware high-tech companies, while RYBN wonderfully unfolded in a whole room "The Algorithmic Trading Freak Show Installation," their amazing research into speculative trading algorithms. Minsu Kim's machine simulation of a human in her "The Illusion of life" and Julian Oliver's "The Transparency Grenade" revealing stolen personal communications, were denuding our inner exposure to intrusive machines. In the words of the curators, the exhibition posed questions, especially the crucial "What next?" with no specific moral perspective, but a lot of food for thought. There were also artists' presentations including Benjamin Gaulo's presentation of commissioned research into "Retail Poisoning," that detailed and analysed a long list of artworks and strategies specifically intervening in shopping spaces. Among the few live performances, Maigret performed his own trademark hard disk-based brutalism, while Valentina Vuksic brought out her ASCII-based gentle ticking glitches. Jon Satrom allowed his Mac to collapse under conceptual glitches sending a message to Apple after a number application crashes. Manuel Knapp mesmerised the audience with his animation of ghostly and geometric black and white, with abstract liquid sequences of lights and shadows, while executing a dense noise sound composition. The festival benefitted from the successful involvement of a new art local centre called "Le Bel Ordinaire" and the local École supérieure d'art, making available different facilities that kept festival participants and attendees together, sharing experiences and knowledge, in the best new media art festival tradition.